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**A STUDY: AMAZING FEATURES AND UNIVERSAL THEMES OF
SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS**

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Abstract

Shakespeare is the greatest playwright of English world. He belongs to Elizabethan age. He emerges out an amazing writer of literary works. He develops characters in every way. He makes themes in a different way. That's why Shakespeare is often called English poet, dramatist, and national poet and considered by many to be the greatest dramatist of all time. He exists as a writer and occupies an unique position in the world of literature. Anyone cannot compare Shakespeare to any other writer or playwright. The poet and dramatist Ben Jonson says "Shakespeare was not of an age but for all time". It is not difficult to describe the gifts that enable to show his creativity through plays, sonnets etc and imaginative vision of pathos and mirth whether read and witnessed in the theatre. Poetic power, perceptiveness and intellectual rapidity's glimpse are in his creativity. He has plied these qualities to human beings and their complete range of the emotions and conflicts also. He is very apt to use word and image so that his mental energy finds full memorable expressions.

Keywords: native, disguise, wonderful, cause, playwright.

Shakespeare was instrumental in fusing material native and classical drama in his works. As an example of play "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark", which shows its revenge theme, its ghost, bombastic set of speech, appears to be tragedy based on the style of Roman playwright Seneca. These qualities compel readers and audiences to examine their deepest emotions as they ponder the effect of death or murder on individuals and environment. No other writer was so successful in combining background and theme. Shakespeare's works are appealing for its unique and universal qualities. In this way, we can say that his all themes are universal. His works deals with variety of themes from forbidden love in his sonnets to jealousy in "Macbeth" to farcical events in comedies. He is able to capture and presents themes in terms of readers and audiences.

A prime example is 'Love' which has been presented in a beautiful manner in "Romeo and Juliet". Its characters express love so that every reader can feel love. Love is the recurrent theme. The treatment

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of love in plays, sonnets is remarkable for all time. He has presented courtly love, compassionate love, unrequited love, sexual love with his own skill. Shakespeare shows love as non perfect part of human condition. "Romeo and Juliet", is the most famous love story. For example, Romeo is passionate about love. It happens when he meets Juliet. On other hand, Juliet who is engaged to marry Paris but this is bound by tradition not passion. Juliet feels real meaning of love when she meets Romeo. It can be called a romantic love.

Another example is in "As You Like It", love is also a central theme here. But it presents a different type of love against each other like romantic courtly love versus bawdy sexual love. Courtly love belongs to the noble and bawdy love belongs to the lower class characters. In "Much Adu About Nothing", Shakespeare has represented different type of lovers. Claudio and Hero's courtly love seems less romantic.

In "Shall I Compare Thee To a Summer's day", is considered to be a great love poem. Shakespeare is able to capture the essence of love in only 14 lines. He compares love to a beautiful summer's day. He says that summer's day will be fading one day but love is eternal. Another example of universal theme is revenge which can be seen in 'Hamlet'. Reader can relate himself to Hamlet; feeling of loss, loneliness and mistrust. Hamlet wants to take revenge from Uncle Claudius so reader also feels Hamlet's emotions.

Shakespeare's characters are unique. He is very careful to create and develop characters from minor characters like Flavius and Marullus (King Lear) to major characters like Beatrice and Benedict (Much Adu About Nothing). In "Romeo and Juliet", the role of Mercutio is universal. His death is the impetus for Tybalt's murder at Romeo's hands. This shows skill of Shakespeare to developing characters in a creative manner.

Shakespeare writes for audience and readers. He tries to understand his audiences. In sonnets, he writes for young lovers and talks about true love. He defines love which is beyond time and age. When he writes to the dark lady, he contrasts the feelings of lust and love. He declares that love does not find in physical beauty because beauty fades with time. Shakespeare is able to create variety of characters. It can be considered his achievement.

Another theme is power which can be seen in plays like "Richard Third", 'King Lear' etc. Shakespeare has represented political power through his characters in these plays. Nature is also preferred in pastoral plays like 'As you like it'. On other hand, human nature is also referred in "King Lear".

In many plays of Shakespeare, there is conflict in historical plays like "Julius Caesar". These types of plays tell real story. "King Lear" shows conflict with families and "Romeo and Juliet" shows conflict between lovers' families. Conflict between

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lovers is in "Much Adu About Nothing" and mental conflict is in "Hamlet". So this type of theme makes plays in a different ways.

Death is a major theme of "Hamlet". The king of Demark is murdered in the beginning of the play. Prince Hamlet comes to know through King's ghost that his father is killed by his uncle Claudius. He wants to take revenge of the murder of his father. The death of Ophelia and his mother disturb Hamlet's mind. Polonius' death makes his son take revenge on Hamlet. So here, death is the major point and theme of Shakespeare. On other hand, madness is also appeared in this play. Hamlet is pretended to be mad to find out the truth behind death of his father.

"Twelfth Night" is a famous romantic comedy. So, love is the main theme of this comedy. Shakespeare shows that love is the main cause of suffering for its characters. Orisino depicts love as appetite and Olivia describes love as a plague through which she is suffering terribly. Viola falls in love with Orisino although she has represented herself as man named Cesario. She cannot tell him about it. Olivia falls in love with Viola in guise of man Cesario. Orisino likes Viola when her male disguise is removed. So, all these things show that gender is also important theme in it. Homoeroticism can be seen in minor character. Antonio who falls in love with his male friend Sebastian. But Antonio's appetite is not satisfied. Orisino and Olivia both find tidy heterosexual

gratification. Social ambition works out through the character Malvolio , the steward. Maria writes a letter from Olivia that makes Malvolio believe that Olivia is in love with him and wants to marry with him. Shakespeare's time represents that a noble woman cannot get married with a man of lower class. Love and desire is the theme through which characters develop. Disguise and deception can be seen in this play.

"Macbeth" is a tragedy. The theme of this play is the corrupting power of ambition. Macbeth is ambitious which forces him to achieve his goal then kills King Duncan. Toward end of the play, he descends in to a kind of frantic, madness. Lady Macbeth's behavior shows her ambitious nature. Ambition brings downfall for them. This shows how this theme revolves around the characters in this story.

"Tempest" is a fairy tale. The illusion of justice is theme of this story. The idea of justice in this play works. Prospero presents himself as a victim of injustice and his idea of justice and injustice is hypocritical. In their first conversation with Caliban, Prospero and Miranda consider him to be a human. Prospero refers him to be a devil. The theme of wonder and admiration which is centered on Miranda. Prospero says that Alonso and his company have had much wonderful vision. The island's wonderful occurrence conceals truth for the purpose of manipulation. He makes theme of treason in it.

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"Richard Third" is a historical play by Shakespeare. The theme of the allure of evil can be noticed thoroughly. Richard does not want to expose the cause of evil in the human mind so much as it explores its operation, depicting the working of Richard's mind and the methods he uses to manipulate, control for his profit. Richard's victims are complicit in their destruction. The theme of power of language can also be noticed. For Richard, it is an important weapon.

In "Othello", racial prejudice is the major theme of this play. We can notice that the character uses racist language while calling Othello like the name 'old black rum, a barbary horse. Jealousy is also theme in it. Iago represents himself as a jealous character. Iago uses jealousy as a weapon against Othello. Othello feels jealousy towards Desdemona and her supposed lover Iago causes Othello to suffer. Deception is also in this story. Othello calls Iago honest to be deceived by Iago. Othello is unable to see that Iago is deceiving him again and again. Characters justify themselves on the basis of justice.

"King Lear" is a tragedy. Authority and chaos are the theme of this tragedy. King Lear is not only king but also a father of three daughters. His two daughters are too greedy for the power. We see that King destroys not only himself but also his authority of Britain. Reconciliation is another theme of this play. Darkness and unhappiness are perusing characters. The father, King Lear and his daughter Cordelia

are symbol of self sacrificing love. Rather than despising Lear for banishing her, she devotes to her father. Nihilism can also be noticed through the characters. King Lear represents a bleak vision of the world. The theme of self knowledge is in this play. The lack of self knowledge brings cause of suffering. The unreability of speech is also in this play. King Lear suggests that people's speeches and words are not trustworthy. These themes are very approaching for it.

"Julius Caesar" is a famous play of Shakespeare. The fate in life and free will are represented as theme of this play. Caesar feels that some events happen beyond human control. Misinterpretation and misreading can also be noticed in it. Many characters fail to interpretative the omen correctly that they face. The night preceding Caesar's appearance at senate is full of portents, but anyone cannot read them correctly. The situation of Cassius' death shows misinterpretation. Inability to read events and people bring downfall in this play. Inflexibility versus compromise is represented in this work. Caesar refuses to believe in omens and goes to the senate. This play shows the relationship between rhetoric and power. It is a powerful authority. Antony wins crowd's heart by using rhetoric. Ethics versus politics can be noticed in it. There is a conflict between them. Caesar wins victory for Rome and becomes famous with common people. Antony proves himself better politician when he gives speeches to crowd. The theme of tyranny is in this story. Brutus

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shows that Caesar is tyrant. He wants power for himself only. These themes develop play and its characters step by step.

So, a lot of visual imagery and symbolism are embedded in Shakespeare's writing. A particular verse and effective poetic speeches can be noticed in the plays. He wrote early plays which are based on tradition. His writing style seems pompous and pretentious. In 'The two Gentlemen of Verona', he has used conflicting and undeveloped writing style. He used iambic pentameter. He developed and changed writing style from tradition to self expressive style. He has also used metaphor and tropes in works. Soliloquy or monologue was a common device that has been used by playwright. Thus, Shakespeare develops lyrical elements about great kings and other characters also.

Shakespeare plays an important role in the world of literature. He knows that characters and situation turns through the theme. This shows that theme plays a major role in the story. By using theme, he create device of writing style which makes work more perfect than other writers'. All these elements developed characters. Due to this, Shakespeare is favorite among readers.

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